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*Upcounty Citizens
Advisory Board*

Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board



left to right:

Tufail Ahmad

Potomac

Heinz Bachmann

Comus

Tobi Printz-Platnick

Boyd's

George Donovan

Derwood

Potsy Hackey

Boyd's

Gustavus McLeod

Boyd's

Dale Ryan

Clark'sburg

Dick Wright

Montgomery Village

Brigid Nuta

Chair

Montgomery Village

Andy Aviles

Germantown

Rhonda Dolan

Damascus

Kevin Schwartz

First Vice Chair

Laytonsville

Jorge Hernandez-

Fugigaki

Clark'sburg

Bob Thompson

Darnestown

Brad Davis

North Potomac

not pictured:

Greg Dillon

Second Vice Chair

Poolesville

Bob Hydorn

Montgomery Village

Tim Milbrath

Dickerson

Loretta Schmitzer

North Potomac

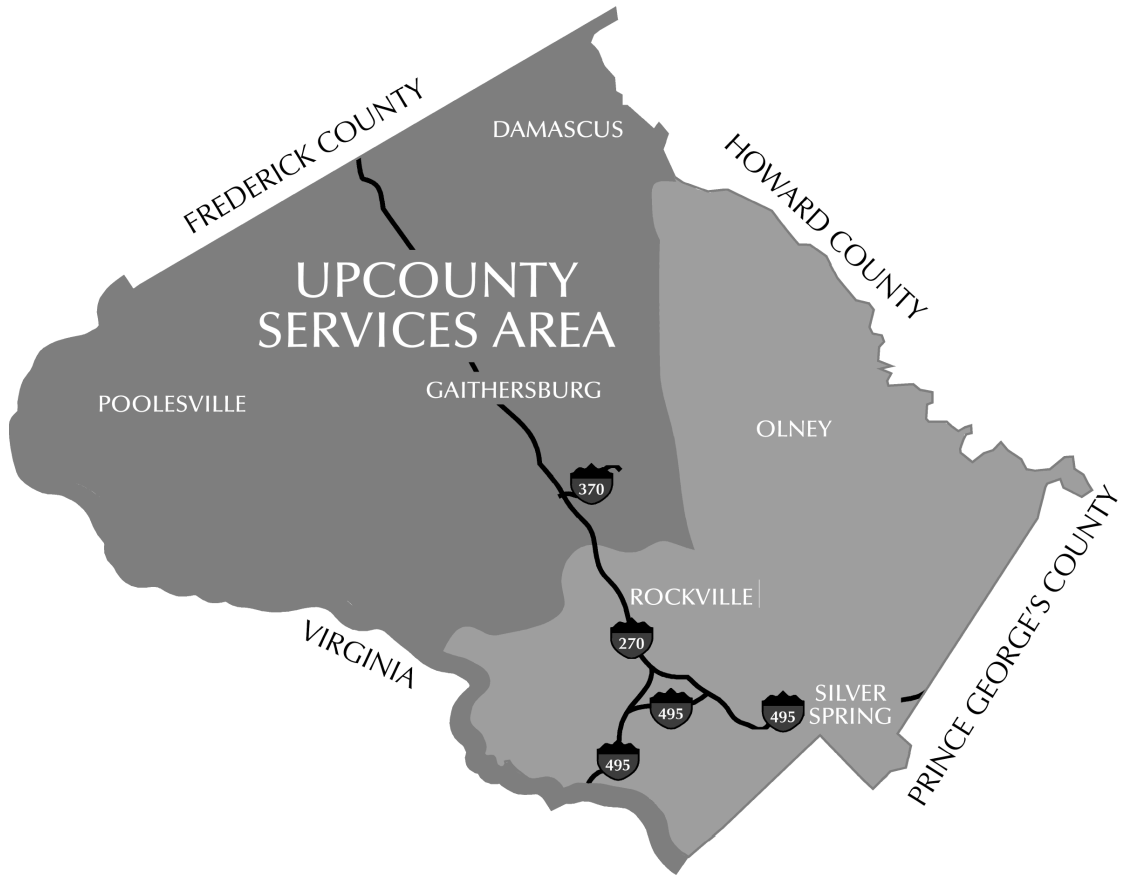
Brad Lewis

Damascus

**Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.*

*Regional Services Centers
Boundary Map*

Upcounty Regional Services Center Boundary Map



Proudly serving the 300,000 residents of Barnesville, Beallsville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Goshen, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac, Poolesville, Tobytown and Washington Grove

*Upcounty Regional
Services Center Team*

Upcounty Regional Services Center Team



back row:

Lisa Lee

*Community Liaison for
Damascus and Greater
Gaithersburg*

Nancy Hislop

*Community Liaison for
Germantown and
Clarksburg*

Lisa Best

Principal Administrative Aide

front row:

Catherine Matthews

Director

Jocelyn Rawat

*Community Liaison for
North Potomac,
Darnestown, Boyds,
Poolesville, Beallsville,
Dickerson and Barnesville*

Patricia Jenkins

*Senior Executive
Administrative Aide*

not pictured:

Teresa White

Acting Assistant Director

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB) is to provide advice to the County Executive and County Council on issues affecting the Upcounty community, and to act as a two-way communication link between the County and the community. The twenty members of the UCAB are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

Upcounty is roughly north and west of Shady Grove Road and comprises about one-half of the area of Montgomery County and one-third of its population. It includes areas ranging from urban to rural in communities such as Barnesville, Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Hyattstown, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville. Therefore, the UCAB's members are selected for geographic balance as well for diversity of background as well as community and professional experience and expertise.

The UCAB began its 2005-2006 year in July with a retreat in which new and continuing members and staff identified the issues likely to be important for the Upcounty during the year. These issues, and the recommendations resulting from the deliberations of the UCAB and its committees in public meetings, are elaborated in the body of this report. In October, the UCAB held a Saturday morning bus tour of the Upcounty to familiarize its members with the facilities and sites related to the issues of the year.

Although the board year typically begins in September, the UCAB added a meeting in August to address impending legislation on Public Institutional Facilities (PIFs) in the Agricultural Reserve. Beginning in September, the UCAB and both of its committees, Social Issues and Land Use and Preservation, met monthly.

The Chief Administrative Officer was briefed in July 2005 on the UCAB's principal recommendations for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP): construction and maintenance of roads in Clarksburg, funding of Legacy Open Space and the construction of an indoor pool and community center in the Poolesville area. The board reaffirmed these recommendations at the February County Council hearings. In November 2005, the UCAB testified before the County Council to support the PIF Working Group's recommendations and to encourage the Council to reaffirm its commitment to protecting the Agricultural Reserve. In April 2006, the UCAB testified before the County Council on the fiscal year 2007 operating budget, stressing out-of-school time programs for youths, transportation and Limited English Proficiency and ESOL programs. The UCAB is gratified by the County Executive's and County Council's responsiveness to Upcounty issues in this year's budget cycle and legislative agenda.

The UCAB thanks the numerous County personnel, elected officials and civic leaders who addressed the board and assisted in its research. It also thanks Great Strides Farm and Celebrate Rural Montgomery for contributing photographs to this report.

Issues and Positions

*Private Institutional Facilities in the
Agricultural Reserve*

*Collaboration Council for Children,
Youth and Families*

*Partnership with Upcounty Latino Network
Home Energy Assistance*

Agricultural Reserve Policy

Building Lot Termination

Poolesville Beauty Spot

Public Safety

Pandemic Flu Preparedness

MARC Train Stations

ISSUES AND POSITIONS

by the Social Issues Committee and the Land Use and Preservation Committee

Private Institutional Facilities in the Agricultural Reserve

The UCAB has long supported the preservation and protection of the Agricultural Reserve. This year's activities regarding Private Institutional Facilities (PIF) regulations brought the board's concern into a fine focus. The UCAB invested many months in the study of the regulations as well as the broader issue of the future of the Agricultural Reserve. To formulate its position the board compiled an extensive array of data and opinions, and it appreciated the insight received from a wide variety of religious, educational, agricultural, community and environmental groups. The board listened to these interested and involved parties who offered perspectives on all sides of the issue. The board then met with and discussed the findings of the PIF Working Group. The board found agreement with many of the Working Group's positions. Specifically, the board supported the Working Group's recommendations to revise the Water and Sewer Plan to prohibit sewer hookups and extensions within the RDT zone; to require more stringent study of multi-use systems; to apply a cap on imperviousness; and to address PIF uses within master plans.



In addition, the UCAB would like the County Council to reconsider the concept of impervious area caps and adopt a more conservative cap of 8% on impervious surfaces within the RDT zone in order to protect the fragile watershed. The board also recommends strengthening the language of proposed regulations to limit sewer hookups in the event of failed systems. To that end, the board also suggests requiring that all other on-site options be exhausted; that a facility be prohibited from expanding its scope or size if hooked up to public sewer; that other properties be prohibited from using the extension; and that the extension be paid for by the end user.

The UCAB believes that PIFs are a vital part of the community. It also recognizes that these restrictions will place additional burdens on the PIFs, which are currently facing the challenges of ever-increasing property costs combined with growing demand for their services, and it encourages the Council to look at ways to help them overcome these challenges. However, the board agrees with the position of the Council that the

placement of large and out-of-character PIFs within the Agricultural Reserve is the wrong way to achieve that goal.

The UCAB wishes to thank the County Council for considering these very important matters and appreciates the Council's actions in maintaining the integrity of the Agricultural Reserve. The board encourages the Council to continue refining and reaffirming its commitment to preserving agriculture and open space in the County. The Agricultural Reserve is a crown jewel of Montgomery County and must be cherished as the precious resource it is.

Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families

Montgomery County's Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families has developed a Community Strategic Plan to reaffirm the local vision for achieving results for children and families and to outline concrete steps to improve child well-being. The first phase in the strategic planning process was the community needs assessment—understanding the gap between the current reality and the County's vision for children, youth and families as well as identifying the community needs.

After community input and consideration by the workgroups and the Child Well-Being Committee, these identified needs were narrowed into a prioritized list for each of several focus areas. Next the needs were referred back to the workgroups for phase two—identification of key strategies.

The prioritized lists included the needs of early childhood (especially in the areas of school readiness, developmental concerns and parental support), youth development (especially in the areas of school, emotional health, safety and risky behaviors) and children with intensive needs (especially in the areas of systems-building and direct services capacity building).

The Child Well-Being Committee emphasized to the board that one priority need cuts across all three focus areas: children's mental health, from promotion of positive mental health through early intervention through intensive intervention for those with severe diagnoses.

The UCAB supports the Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families in determining, prioritizing and addressing the pressing needs in Montgomery County. The UCAB encourages the County Council to make services, especially to the most vulnerable segments of this population, a top priority in the coming years, lest the results of inaction adversely affect the well-being of the County in the long term.

Montgomery County continues to examine and address the needs of children, youth and families. Processes such as these, however, are only as useful as the follow-through they receive. It is important that this research and groundwork gets translated into sustainable solutions for the intended beneficiaries and for the good of the County.

Partnership with Upcounty Latino Network

The mission of the Upcounty Latino Network is to strengthen the health and human service provider networks in the Upcounty region of Montgomery County and to improve access and delivery of health and human services to individuals and families that encounter language and cultural barriers in the region. Based on discussions over the past year, ULN members agreed to focus their attention on improving access to mental health services for Latino youth and families. The Social Issues Committee of the UCAB was invited by the ULN to collaborate to review, assess, and recommend needed improvements for the delivery of regional mental health services.

During the first half of 2006, presenters from the public and private sectors are reporting to ULN about available mental health services and gaps in services that impact the Upcounty Latino communities and communities-at-large. Based on this review of existing services and the priority needs of Latino youth and families, the ULN, with support from the Social Issues Committee members will develop a written report and recommendations regarding needed program and policy improvements.

This collaborative project will be the second time members of the Social Issues Committee and the ULN have worked together. The first partnership, last year, resulted in an Education Roundtable focusing on the academic achievement of Latino youth and a Montgomery County Public Schools Task Force to implement many of the group's recommendations.

Home Energy Assistance

The Social Issues Committee was briefed on the programs offered by Montgomery County through the State of Maryland for monetary assistance to low-income consumers of electricity and other power sources. The Maryland Energy Assistance Program and the Electric Universal Service Program serve over 6,000 households in Montgomery County and provide lifesaving assistance to County residents. With a small staff of four people, the Montgomery County Office of Home Energy Programs directs the expenditure of millions of dollars to the utility companies to provide the area's poorest residents with help in heating their homes each year.

Given the fact that electricity rates are in the process of being deregulated, it is likely that there will be a surge in applications for assistance in the coming 12 months. There are currently 27,000 eligible households in the County and with rates rising so sharply many of these households will need help to prevent deaths from the cold this winter. The board commends the work of the OHEP and urges the County and State to provide the office with one additional full-time permanent staff to handle the increase in demand.

Agricultural Reserve Policy

As a result of the discussions raised by the desire of PIFs to build in the Agricultural Reserve and the subsequent Zoning Text Amendments, the UCAB discussed and recommended the need for the County Council to review the overall Agricultural Reserve Policy. The board is concerned that overall demand for affordable land in the county is resulting in a piecemeal approach to the Agricultural Reserve policy. Given the current and anticipated future demand for land, it is necessary for the County to study the current policy and make necessary changes that will protect the Agricultural Reserve as a vital resource for the entire county while striking a balance between preserving land and farming and meeting development needs.



The UCAB held several meetings throughout the year to learn of the needs of PIFs, farmers and community groups and experienced record attendance at its meetings. The board supported zoning text amendments that limited non-agricultural use consistent with the current intent of the Agricultural Reserve policy. Finally, the board urged the County Council to take up review of the Agricultural Reserve policy and was pleased when the Council appointed the Ad Hoc Agricultural Policy Working Group. The UCAB has asked that it be allowed to provide a liaison to the group.

The board encourages the Working Group to consider the development needs along with the desire to maintain the vitality of farming in Montgomery County. It is further suggested that this group and the County Council consider needs as private wells and septic systems throughout the county face the end of their life cycle. Finally, there will continue to be a growing need for PIFs in the County and a proactive solution to meeting their needs while safeguarding the Agricultural Reserve is necessary.

Shady Grove Sector Plan

As a result of the County Council's approval of the Shady Grove Sector Plan, the board discussed implementation of the plan, which recommends relocation of County facilities currently located in the area. The first phase of development will work around the current facilities. Phase two will increase the density once County facilities are relocated.

The UCAB has requested to have a seat on the Shady Grove Sector Plan Implementation Group and will continue to monitor the development progress. It is important that the relocation of the County facilities does not adversely affect the other areas of the

Upcounty. A particular concern was that the Webb Tract was to be considered as a location for the MCPS school bus depot, which would adversely affect East Montgomery Village, the traffic along Snouffer School Road and the intersections at either end of Snouffer School Road. The Route 124 intersection is already a failed intersection. The board was pleased that the County Council agreed that that particular use was not appropriate.

The board reiterates its position that all the precedent conditions required before approval for proceeding in stage of the plan must be fulfilled. Those related to adequate school facilities and transportation capabilities are of paramount concern.

Building Lot Termination (Super TDR)

In the continued effort to protect farmland in Montgomery County, the Department of Economic Development has proposed the Building Lot Termination (BLT) program, also known as the Super TDR program, which provides a new tool for land owners in the Agricultural Reserve to further protect their land. As proposed, the program will provide an enhanced level of compensation representing the actual value of a buildable lot containing 25 acres that has been approved by the County, if they agree to keep this land in agricultural production or managed forest land. Under this program, the value of the Super TDRs will be higher in an effort to protect additional land in the Agricultural Reserve. The UCAB supports the inclusion of \$14,000,000 in the operating budget for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 for the purchase of easements including BLTs.

Poolesville Beauty Spot

The board has discussed the service changes to be introduced in July at the Poolesville Beauty Spot. The changes are along the lines of those introduced last year in Damascus, most notably that the facility no longer accepts yard trim. Although the changes were welcomed in Damascus where the Beauty Spot had caused traffic congestion, in the Poolesville area these changes are more questionable in nature and quite unpopular among residents. Because the Beauty Spot is located well out of town and in the rural area, it does not cause traffic disruptions. Currently, residents drop off large amounts of yard waste that would be inappropriate for the proposed curbside pickup. Hence, there is a fear that some of that waste will be burned or dumped illegally rather than taken all the way to the Shady Grove Transfer Station as suggested in a leaflet distributed recently to the Beauty Spot users. The negative impact on the environment is obvious as are the possible fire risks. The UCAB has communicated these concerns to the Solid Waste Services Division of DPWT. The department and the UCAB will continue to monitor the situation.

Public Safety

The UCAB reflects the feelings of most citizens of the Upcounty that public safety officers are critical to the daily as well as the long-term well-being of the Upcounty and the region as a whole. Their presence and professionalism add to the quality of life in the community in addition to protecting it. The UCAB believes that the capital and operating budget needs of the Police and Fire Departments must be supported by the County Executive and County Council, and the UCAB strongly suggests the construction of the new police station for the 6th District and the new fire station in Clarksburg as soon as possible.

The UCAB supports the federally funded gang prevention task force incorporating both Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties. Gang behavior crosses geographical boundaries and is an issue which the Upcounty needs to face straight on.

The UCAB would also like to emphasize the unique situation with the 5th District Police Command. The 5th District has the lowest number of calls for service in the County but three times the area of the next adjacent district, which can result in longer than desirable response times to calls, depending on the time, day and shift. This needs to be watched closely as the population of the area increases. Already in the greater Germantown area there has been an increase in street crime, thefts and vandalism at construction sites, and thefts from cars, reflective of the rapidly growing population in the area.

The UCAB urges the County to maintain personnel at authorized levels for both the Departments of Police and Fire and Rescue Services. The UCAB supports the very high standards which the County's public safety officers must meet, and believes these standards should never be compromised.

Pandemic Flu Preparedness

Although the UCAB did not take any formal action this session on the issue of pandemic flu preparedness it did recommend that it be given updated information in particular to the Upcounty from the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security. It is important to note that the UCAB will add this topic as one of high priority and strong interest in the months ahead. The UCAB will review the County's Pandemic Preparedness Response Plan as it is created and will respond to ensure that the plan will enable the County to prepare and respond to a pandemic influenza outbreak in an appropriate and timely manner. The board is confident that as the pandemic flu issue will continue to change so the County's plan will have the need to update and revise and reissue as necessary.

The board informally passed along some suggestions that the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security needed to be prepared to meet any situation

regarding this issue. This year members of the board took action to recommend that the County's plan, at a minimum, continue to meet the following objectives: share with the UCAB appropriate information from official sources in a timely manner; modify operations and procedures as needed to protect the citizens who live and work in the Upcounty; educate all Upcounty citizens on the three stages of pandemic flu; and review with the UCAB any policy and procedural changes to ensure the Upcounty is notified and what the impact will be on providing County services to the citizens.

MARC Train Stations

When the Maryland Department of Transportation announced its plans to close the MARC train stations in Boyds and Dickerson, many Upcounty residents spoke out in opposition to the plan. The board met with County transportation policy personnel and urged the County to work closely with the State of Maryland to find other viable options for the stations. It recommended ways of increasing ridership, including enhanced marketing, discounted tickets and more frequent trips. Although gratified by the emergency legislation passed in Annapolis to delay closure for a year while alternatives can be considered, the board continues to monitor the situation. The UCAB believes that public transit is the key to maintaining the Agricultural Reserve and opposes any cuts in transit services.

Upcounty Communities

Clarksburg and Vicinity

Gaithersburg, Washington Grove,

Derwood and Montgomery Village

Germantown

Damascus, Goshen and Laytonsville

Western Upcounty

UPCOUNTY COMMUNITIES

by the Upcounty Regional Services Center staff

CLARKSBURG AND VICINITY

Clarksburg was settled in 1752 by William Clark who was a trader with the Seneca Indians. That same year Michael Dowden received a patent for forty acres on what is now Hammerhill Farm where he established a tavern, Dowden's Ordinary, which was the midway stagecoach stop between Georgetown and Frederick City on the Old Frederick Road. The ordinary was visited by many travelers including General Braddock who was encamped there en route to Fort DuQuesne during the French and Indian Wars and Andrew Jackson who dined at the ordinary while traveling to the federal city of Washington. In the mid 1800's Clarksburg was a bustling crossroads with general stores, tanneries, and blacksmith and wheelwright shops serving the local farming community. As the nineteenth century came to a close, the town had become a sleepy hamlet and would continue as such for the entire twentieth century.

Clarksburg is now transitioning from its long bucolic history to its emergence as the last town center in the County's wedges and corridors development plan for the I-270 Corridor. The first phase of residential development began with the Terrabrook community adding over one hundred new families to Clarksburg by the end of 2002 with an additional 1,200 dwelling units and a town center to be completed over the next couple of years. Clarksburg Town Center, which is now under the management of Newland Communities, will be followed by Clarksburg Village, the largest development plan submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board since Montgomery Village in the 1960's. Several other large residential developments have recently been completed or are under construction or are planned such as the Highlands of Clarksburg, Greenway Village and Cabin Branch which will bring the population to about 30,000 in twenty years.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has worked closely with developers and the community to ensure that green space and parklands will be preserved, while Montgomery County Public Schools have planned for additional schools such as the new elementary school and high school that will open in 2006. The County also has plans for a new fire station, additional police presence and recreational facilities to meet the needs and expectations of its residents. An ombudsman has been hired to assist residents and developers as Clarksburg evolves into a viable town.

Clarksburg is also home to Montgomery County's new correctional facility which opened in March 2003 with a successful transfer of over 600 inmates from the Rockville jail. Staff at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) maintains an open dialogue with the community providing information and responding to concerns at the bi-monthly MCCF Community Advisory Group meetings attended by neighboring residents, civic and business leaders, and government representatives. MCCF Community

Advisory Group members are committed to ensuring that the facility meets the needs of the inmates and the security concerns of the community.

GAITHERSBURG, WASHINGTON GROVE, DERWOOD AND MONTGOMERY VILLAGE

Gaithersburg

Gaithersburg is in the heart of Montgomery County and is the largest incorporated area in the Upcounty. The city has been recognized nationally as one of the top cities in which to live in the United States. It started as a small settlement called Log Town in 1765 and was incorporated as the City of Gaithersburg in 1878. Now the city has a diverse population of more than 52,600 residents with 58% white, 14.5% African American, 14% Asian, and 20% of Hispanic origin. The city is administered by a mayor, city manager



and city council government. It also has its own planning commission and board of appeals that oversee development and zoning matters.

Gaithersburg features several mixed-use developments that make use of many “smart growth” concepts. The Washingtonian/Rio development continues to flourish, and new businesses continue to be added. The Kentlands features a walkable community with residences and

businesses in close proximity. This area also continues to add amenities. Finally, the development plan for the Shady Grove Sector, which is the area surrounding the Shady Grove Metro station, is being updated to incorporate the same types of “smart growth” initiatives. This area currently houses many of the County’s industrial centers, such as bus depots, a liquor warehouse and the waste transfer station.

Washington Grove

More than a century ago, members of the Methodist congregations in Washington, D.C., searching for a cool, quiet spot for retreats, set up their tents in the wooded oasis that is now Washington Grove. This oak-shaded town, which retains its historic charm and summer-camp feel, is still a refuge from city life. Roy McCathran, the town's first mayor, referred poetically to Washington Grove as "...a town within a forest, an oasis of tranquility and a rustic jewel in the diadem of the great free state of Maryland."

Amazingly, this is as true today as it was in 1937 when he spoke these words. The dramatic effect has been heightened by the intense urban development now surrounding Washington Grove.

Only about a dozen paved roads pass through the cluster of 216 homes, most fronted by gravel and grass walkways originally designed to protect passersby from being trampled

by horses. About 60% of the town's 200-plus acres is green space. There are two forest preserves, several parks, and a small lake where residents swim in the summer and skate in winter.

The Town of Washington Grove continues to be a vibrant community governed by its mayor and town council. The town also has recently improved its web-site containing updated information on the town officials, committees, facilities, town charter, ordinances and master plan.

Derwood

The small, unincorporated town of Derwood began its development in the late 1800's with the opening of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad. Although the town served as a commercial center, it did not experience the accelerated growth that its neighbors, Rockville and Gaithersburg, experienced. In 1954, the Derwood Station was destroyed in a fire, and the town remained mostly undeveloped until the construction of Metro's Shady Grove Station in 1984.

Derwood is now a community of approximately 2,000 residents living primarily in single-family homes adjacent to Lake Needwood. As home to Metro's last stop on the Red Line, the area has become a major transit hub. In keeping with smart growth concepts, the revised Shady Grove Sector Plan designates the area surrounding the Metro station as a high-density residential and commercial area. However, at this time, the area immediately surrounding the Metro station remains an industrial park.

Montgomery Village

Montgomery Village is home to more than 40,000 residents. It is one of the first planned communities in the area and has come to reflect the diversity of the Washington metropolitan area. The Village is located northeast of the Gaithersburg incorporated city limits and is managed by the Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc., headed by its executive vice president, and a board of directors who work with the County and State on a variety of issues and concerns. The foundation publishes a bi-weekly newspaper and provides residents with recreation programs, maintenance of common areas, architectural standards, and other amenities.

In this time of an active economic market, the community has been pressured to accept higher density development projects. The community's unique town sector zoning is also being revised as its expiration date approaches.

GERMANTOWN

The evolution of Germantown from a village crossroads in the 1840's to its designation in the *1974 Germantown Master Plan* as a corridor city in the *General Plan* for Montgomery County has been astounding. This 11,000 acre three-by-five mile area bounded by Great and Little Seneca Creeks and bisected by I-270 was to be developed into a "new community" similar to Columbia and Reston. However, because of

fragmented land ownership, Germantown could not be developed by a single developer. To offset this problem, the County government assumed the role of coordinator, working with multiple landowners to create a cohesive “new town.” This approach was a first in the United States with local government attempting to guide and stage development through its planning, zoning, subdivision, and capital programming processes.

The 1989 revision of the master plan recommended some changes that would make the town center the principal activity center for Germantown and would establish a single-family detached residential character in selected areas to provide a broader mix of housing types so that Germantown could evolve into a full life-cycle community. The proposed proportion of single-family homes was increased from 18% to 29% as the proportion of single-family attached dwellings was decreased from 58% to 31%.

Germantown residents are now seeing the fruition of these plans as the development of the town center continues with the on-going addition of commercial space, the construction of a new library and a hotel, and plans for an urban park. In reaction to this development, older commercial areas have initiated renovations to attract major retailers and to extend the feel of the architecture



of the new town center. This has not come too soon for the 80,000 plus residents who are enjoying the ambiance that the Germantown community offers to all ages and ethnicities.

With the upcoming revision of the 1989 master plan by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the community will again have the opportunity to provide vital input that will shape the continuing evolution of Germantown. The revision process is beginning as this document goes to press and will continue for approximately two years. Germantown residents and business owners are encouraged to participate in this process.

DAMASCUS, GOSHEN AND LAYTONSVILLE

Damascus

Damascus is a rural commercial center and residential community located in the northeast corner of Montgomery County. It has been planned as one of the key points for the County’s Agricultural Reserve and Rural Open Space initiatives. The Damascus town center is located at the headwaters of four major stream systems; the Patuxent River, Bennett Creek, Great Seneca Creek, and the Hawlings River, which give the town a unique environmental setting.

Damascus is not an incorporated community, but it is well-represented by the Damascus Community Alliance which works with County officials on community issues. Local schools are the heart of the community. All Damascus Cluster schools are over capacity, but the new Rocky Hill Middle School in nearby Clarksburg, which opened in 2004, has helped to alleviate some overcrowding. The conversion of the current Rocky Hill Middle school into a new Clarksburg high school is to be completed in time for the 2006 fall school year and should also help alleviate overcrowding. Damascus also celebrated the opening of the much anticipated new 25,000-square foot community center in 2004. Recent revisions to the Damascus Master Plan maintain the rural character of the town while focusing density in a well-defined town center.

Goshen/Laytonsville

Goshen, an unincorporated area, is a geographically extended community with a minimum of two-acre zoning, and is considered an agricultural area. The town was founded in 1782 by John Layton, who owned a saddle shop, which also housed the town's post office. The incorporated town of Laytonsville has remained small, due in part to the unavailability of public water; however, significant development continues to occur in the greater Laytonsville area.

WESTERN UPCOUNTY

The northwestern corner of the County falls mostly within the prized Agricultural Reserve. Among farms, equestrian activities, and vast open spaces lay several small towns, each with its own character.

Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson

Barnesville, Beallsville and Dickerson, three tiny towns by Washington metropolitan area standards, feature many of the County's Rural Rustic Roads, rural zoning ordinances, and preserved open spaces. Although the area has a long history of dairy farming, much of the agriculture in the region consists of full-time and part-time cattle farming, crop farming, nurseries, and particularly horse farming. With over 14,000 horses in the County, the equestrian industry continues to grow and to make a nearly \$2 million contribution to the local economy.

These towns and surrounding areas are also home to several industrial facilities, including the Resource Recovery Facility (also known as the incinerator), the Mirant power plant and the privately owned Neutron Products, which handles nuclear material for medical applications. The County's Dickerson Facilities Implementation Group, which is comprised of civic leaders, along with the Sugarloaf Citizens Association, the incorporated Town of Barnesville, and a liaison from the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, is a strong advocate for regulatory compliance at these facilities and is vigilant about preserving the rural landscape of the region. These civic representatives, the County, the State, and the facilities themselves are ongoing partners in balancing industrial, environmental and community needs.

Boyds

Affectionately known by its residents as “Home in the Country,” Boyds is on the edge of the Agricultural Reserve, adjacent to the developing Germantown area as well as Black Hill Regional Park. After a decades-long struggle to prevent the development of a rock quarry, a landfill and a dense housing development, the Boyds community breathed a collective sigh of relief as more than 1,600 acres of previously corporate-owned land was placed in permanent preservation in recent years.

Poolesville

The incorporated town of Poolesville, named after its first resident, John Poole II, is largely independent with its own elected commissioners; the local government works in tandem with Montgomery County. The largest of the “small towns” in western Upcounty, Poolesville retains much of its rural charm while addressing issues of growth, crime and transportation. The community remains close-knit, and most residents consider Poolesville to be the County’s most desirable place to live. In that spirit, the entire town comes out each September to celebrate the community’s culture and history at Poolesville Days.

North Potomac and Darnestown

The communities of North Potomac and Darnestown, which can be found along Route 28 north of Shady Grove Road, must balance the desire to maintain the advantages of small, older communities with the need to incorporate new development. Although no new roads are planned for the area, these two towns are not a part of the Agricultural Reserve and are seeing new public and private development. New homes, senior housing, and commercial buildings have recently been built in the Travilah area of North Potomac. In conjunction with this development, the County anticipates the need for a new fire station to be located on the Public Safety Training Academy grounds. Residents of the area have long awaited a new community center to be located on property adjacent to the Big Pines Local Park on Travilah Road.